

The WAGE Equity Act

Cosponsors:

Balderson, Bost, Brooks, Bucshon, Burgess, Cole, Collins, Conaway, Cook, Diaz-Balart, Flores, Fortenberry, Freguson, Gianforte, Gonzalez, Granger, Hagedorn, Herrera Beutler, Hudson, Hurd, Huzienga, Joyce (David), Katko, King, Marshall, McHenry, McKinley, McMorris Rodgers, Reed, Smucker, Stauber, Steil, Stivers, Thompson, Timmons, Turner, Upton, Wagner, Walden, Walorski, Wright, Zeldin, Roe, Chabot, Latta, Byrne, Kinzinger, LaHood

Organizations in Support:

- U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Background:

- There are nearly 75 million women working in the United States, the most ever.
- Of the 2.8 million jobs created in the past year, 58% have gone to women.
- Women are graduating college at a higher rate than their male counterparts (56% of degrees conferred last year)
- Women are increasingly their families primary bread winners.
- We cannot ignore that even after accounting for personal choice and life circumstance women make less than men. This is wrong and we owe it to the public to constructively engage.

Where the Wage Equity Act comes from:

- This bill looks to innovation in the states to draw from bipartisan legislation that has been signed by Republican Governors.
- Major sections of the WAGE Equity Act come from bipartisan laws signed by Republican Governors in Massachusetts, Vermont, and Maryland.

The WAGE Equity Act does the following:

- Empowers employees to utilize flexible work arrangements, which are increasingly necessary in the 21st century.
- Creates a “Self-Audit” system that would incentivize businesses to rectify pay disparity proactively.
- Protects an individual’s ability to negotiate employment based upon merit while also offering the flexibility to voluntarily disclose prior salary history.
- Protects employers’ ability to ensure negotiations in good faith by explicitly protecting the employer’s ability to have a salary expectation conversation and allowing the employer to act on salary history if it is voluntarily offered during interview process.
- Protects employee ability to discuss compensation with their colleagues while giving employers the right to set reasonable limitations on the time, location, and manner of this activity.
- Authorizes a grant program for targeted negotiation education for women in college and career/tech programs.
- Instructs GAO to conduct a study on the causes and impacts of the “manager’s gap” which is the time when many women leave the workforce for parental reasons and has been shown to be a significant cause of pay inequity.